

A Letter From Dean Harold Hongju Koh



Dean Harold Hongju Koh and Robert Bernstein at the 2007 Robert L. Bernstein International Human Rights Fellowship Symposium.

Dear Graduates and Friends of Yale Law School,

During the past three years, this page has sketched the myriad ways in which today's Yale Law School pursues its 21st century goals of globalization, renewal, professionalism, and public service. This *Yale Law Report* issue explores the last: how members of our community daily pursue lives not of selfishness, but of service.

Some imagine that few present-day Yale law students travel the once heavily trod path from military service to the Sterling Law Buildings. But in fact, as our cover story shows, no fewer than nine current students have completed active military duty, and their Yale Law Veterans Association now brings career military perspectives to our ongoing debate over public values. As Owen Fiss's essay suggests, since September 11, that debate has been shaped by the challenges that a claimed "war against terrorism" poses to our constitutional traditions. But if, as he argues, that vision should not drive future public discourse, what ideas should? For one answer, see the "wish list" presented within by various faculty members, suggesting how a new Administration could improve democracy, school choice, the environment, health care, family and tax policy, gay and lesbian rights, the war on drugs, and the revolution in corporate governance. (To add your thoughts on how the next Administration might restore our reputation on human rights, check out our new, interactive *Yale Law Report* website [www.law.yale.edu/ylr], whereby alumni readers can comment about this and other stories in this issue.)

Elsewhere, this issue surveys other ways in which our community advances the public good. The Arthur Liman Public Interest Program celebrated its tenth anniversary with an electrifying call to service by Newark Mayor Cory Booker '97. The Robert L. Bernstein International Human Rights Fellowship Symposium reached its 10-year mark by examining Bob Bernstein's abiding passion—human rights in China—only weeks before a delegation of 100 Yale students and professors toured China at the invitation of President Hu Jintao. Our new Supreme Court Advocacy Clinic litigated its first high-profile

Establishment Clause case. And our Middle East Legal Studies Seminar grappled with how to understand Middle Eastern "Citizenship, Membership, and National Identity."

A drive to create public good drove many of the other innovations of the last academic year. Yale Law Women joined groups from eleven other schools to launch an online community for women in the legal profession, called "Ms. JD" (www.ms-jd.org). At the same time, our students created an innovative video advocacy website to demand action on Sudan (www.24hoursfordarfur.org). And the *Yale Journal of International Law* invited a dozen leading young scholars—nearly all our graduates—for a symposium arguing that a "new" New Haven School of International Law has emerged, one that revives the notion of international law as a creative medium devoted to building a more humane world public order.

One fitting exemplar of this approach to international law was the Helsinki Process, initiated in 1976 by the late President Gerald Ford '41, who passed on in December after a lifetime of national service. He was hardly alone; his Yale Law School classmates included such historic figures as Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, Peace Corps Founder Sargent Shriver, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. President Ford's life, and theirs, reminds us that our tradition of promoting public service is neither new, nor transient.

Harold Hongju Koh